

CAMDEN'S PROMISE CHARTER SCHOOL MINUTES – May 21, 2019

The regular meeting of the Camden's Promise Charter School Board of Trustees, County of Camden, State of New Jersey, was held at 879 Beideman Avenue, Camden on January 7, 2019 at 5:30 pm.

Members present: Mr. Loyola, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Nieves (in @ 6:13), Ms. Hinson and Ms. Lombardo

Members absent: Ms. Maldonado

Also present: Dr. Conway, Ms. Baughn, Mr. Helmbrecht and Public

The pledge to the flag was led by Ms. Lombardo

Open
Meeting

The meeting opened at 5:30pm at which time the following was stated: "The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the rights of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of the public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Camden's Promise Charter School Board of Trustees has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted on the door of the Camden Promise Charter School and in the Courier Post. "

CORRESPONDENCE:

Open
Meeting

Motion by Ms. Hinson and seconded by Mr. Loyola that the Board of Trustees open the meeting to receive comment from the public present. (See Pages 11156-11159)

Unanimously Approved

1. Ms. Britt	Student/Staff Issues	5:33PM
2. Mr. McDougald	Letter	5:39PM
3. Ms. G. Martinez		5:47
4. Ms. Hamilton		5:49
5. Ms. Greene		5:52
6. Ms. Shepard		5:55
7. Ms. Ash		5:57
8. Ms. Petthying		6:03
9. Ms. Miller		6:05
10. Ms. Rathgeber		6:09

Close
Meeting

Motion by Ms. Hinson and seconded by Mr. Loyola that the Board of Trustees close the meeting for public comment and return to session.

Unanimously Approved

In Executive
Session

Motion by Mr. Loyola and seconded by Ms. Hinson that the Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session at 6:19pm.

Unanimously Approved

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Out Executive
Session

Motion by Ms. Nieves and seconded by Ms. Hinson that the Board of Trustees end Executive Session at 6:42pm.
Unanimously Approved

CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**Staffing Matters**

Staffing
.. .

Motion by Ms. Hinson and seconded by Mr. Loyola that the Board of Trustees approve the staffing update for the 2019 summer program staffing chart. (See Page 11160)
Unanimously Approved

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Loyola and seconded by Ms. Nieves that the Board of Trustees adjourn at 6:55pm.
Unanimously Approved

May 2, 2019

Dear Board of Trustees,

We hope this correspondence finds you well as you continue the business of steering and guiding the Camden's Charter School Network to greater heights. Through your direction, a number of administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals have been given opportunities to educate, mentor, and prepare Camden's youth for the world within and beyond the city's confines. This effort, however challenging, has been positive, joyous, and quite frankly a blessing to experience overall. However, as with a number of things in life, there are generally two sides to the coin. To be specific, you may have heard murmurs about some teachers in the high school advocating for real solutions to persistent issues. While this is true, you may have only been given one point of view on the matter. In this vein, the purposes of this letter are threefold. One, we believe it necessary to provide you with a synopsis as to what led to seeking answers to our concerns. Two, we further believe it necessary to express our unending support for Ms. Dara Ash as our principal and leader of Camden Academy Charter High School. Three, we also believe it necessary to share the bases behind our concerns with policy as it relates to teacher rights.

First and foremost, the steps taken to have various problems heard and addressed are long-standing and rooted in what was not done since the high school's infancy. There have been undertakings in the past to develop professional learning communities (PLC) and other focus groups to tackle the issues affecting teachers and some administrators. In addition, the aforementioned cohorts were comprised of the parties also mentioned in the same sentence. With this in mind, many of us were given the impression we had a voice in helping to strengthen policy and the infrastructure of school operations. After fulfilling what was asked of us and/or presenting our recommendations to the building coordinator and chief school administrators, our suggestions, unfortunately, fell on deaf ears. The process just described would take shape in different forms during Academy's evolution and end the same much to our disappointment. It is here that teacher frustrations begin to set in and continue to proliferate to this day. As a result, disillusionment about how we could affect positive change emerged leading to an overall complacency about our lack of influence within the organization. Due to the number of veteran faculty and staff employed with the high school, many of us will most likely retire from here. With

this in mind, we are reaching out to you to ascertain what could be offered to meet our concerns.

Second, a number of faculty and staff have worked alongside or under Ms. Dara Ash since her hire in 2001. To be absolutely clear, there is no one more dedicated, loyal, hard-working, strategic, and compassionate to Academy's mission, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and students than her. From the time of her appointment as principal, we, her faculty and staff, have given her our tireless support and encouragement to help her manage the day to day operations of the high school. Although we may disagree with her at times just as people do with one another every day, it has never once negatively affected our impression of her as our leader. This is evidenced by the additional duties, class coverages, and/or courses we may have to attend to on a daily basis. Moreover, she is sensitive to the needs and concerns of faculty and staff almost to the point of a fault. In other words, she gets so immersed in trying to resolve what is brought to her attention that she neglects herself during the process. Despite the recent negative publicity Ms. Ash has had to endure in recent months, you will not find one of us who is not on her side. Furthermore, we deem it unfair and almost manipulative how the current state of circumstances is in any way a reflection of her leadership. Our grievances have absolutely nothing to do with Ms. Ash. She has exhibited patience and composure with us during times of ease and unease. For this, we will unabashedly continue to stand with her as the leader and principal of Camden Academy.

Third, the discontent alluded to in the second paragraph has more to do with equity and accountability as it relates to what is mentioned or not in the faculty/staff handbook. More specifically, questions pertaining to salary and annual increases, contracts, certifications, maternity/paternity leave, sick leave, family leave, coverages, administrative duties, and nepotism are some of the more pressing issues just to name a few. One of the major concerns associated with one or more of the items listed is how each of these are equitably levied and practiced throughout the entire network. For example, it was recently discovered that team leaders in the middle school are compensated for monitoring administrative detentions while deans in the high school are not. To add insult to injury, this came to light by sheer accident and now our grade level administrators think their time after school serving in this capacity has been exploited for the last ten years. Another instance of inequity deals with the notion that some uncertified teachers are paid more than their certified counterparts. Outside of the pay scale (not included in the 2017-18 faculty/staff handbook), what criteria are taken into consideration when determining one's salary (and annual increases)? In sum, one must inquire into the

accountability or oversight of these processes to ensure slights of this nature do not occur. As you can read, a number of our grievances stem from the faculty/staff handbook. Sadly, no one in the high school received a current, tangible copy of one nor given instructions on where to find and access the digital version of it. Consequently, the majority of Academy personnel do not know the intricacies surrounding any of the items delineated above.

In essence, our intention for this letter was to simply communicate how we in the high school arrived at this point, emphasize our staunch devotion to Ms. Ash, and clarify why many of us are relatively at wit's end based on the policy inequities already described. Since the writing of this communique, dialogue between the superintendent, administrators, faculty, and staff have begun to discuss the matters described above via school-wide meetings and email. Although these steps ought to have been taken long ago and appeared sincere at the outset, there were statements made and actions taken that further drove some towards wanting to be a part of the solution as opposed to the problem. One glaring example of this was an open dialogue regarding this topic in a digital format. As a result of this, an email thread grew supporting one viewpoint. However, as soon as two responses were offered highlighting an opposing point of view, the email thread was "shut down." This along with other actions overtly and covertly exhibited to this very day, unfortunately, has dissuaded some from speaking up for what is ethical. As you will eventually read the names of those who agreed to add their names below, there were others who abstained from doing so for fear of any reprisals. Fortunately, we will not be swayed to turn the other cheek as the time for action is now. We firmly believe we can work with Ms. Ash to resolve the daily quirks that arise in the high school while also seeking to ameliorate the injustices already noted.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil J. McDougald

Eugene Brown

Gabrielle Martinez

Krystina Gorman

Samar Mazareh

Alla Lantsman

Caroline Rash

Ed Downs

Melissa Girondi

Ronald Jackson

Jose Garcia

Marcus Major

Dr. Madeline Fenner	Sharon Waller	Joji Thompson
Tyler Albright	Jessica Petthyng	Marcos Cotto
Eric Tavel	Matt Naylor	Edwin Phillips
Jasmine Greene	Timothy Pilla	Patrick Ardis
Kimberly Haddad	Joseph Morrison	Caitlin Fenning
Corina Benedetti	Shelyna Hamilton	Jessica R. Mills
Maria Barreto	Arlene Villanueva	Christina Shephard
Sharon Patton	Susan Rathgeber	

Summer School Staffing 2019

Academy		Promise					Pride	Rosedale
Summer School	Orientation	Swim Program	Summer School	Orientation	New Hires	Orientation Camp		
Ash	Nigro		Brining ½	McDougald	Miller 1.0	McCall ½	Albright ½	Alberto 1.0
Greene ½	Quao		Morgan ½	Harris	Pulaski 1.0	Cruz ½	Berriel 1.0	Brandt 1.0
Coto ½	Hamilton	Iannuzzi 1	Kopp ½	Ciervo	Piscopo 1.0	Vazquez ½	Bermudez 1.0	Brnich 1.0
Rathgeber ½	Gonzalez	Tavel 1.0	Flemming ½	Watson	Villarini 1.0	Johnson ½	M. Brown 1.0	Brooks 1.0
Mills ½	Marzan	Grochal 1.0	Johnson ½	Rossi 1.0		Petteway ½	Bradley 1.0	Brown J 1.0
Johnson ½	Velez		Ramos ½	Brown		Winfrey ½	DeJesus 1.0	Burke L ½
Vazquez ½	Villanueva		Pollard ½	Satchell		Santone ½	Diaz 1.0	Burke 1.0
	O'Brien		Reed ½	Alden		Rankin ½	Donohue 1.0	Doughty 1.0
	Street		Koppen ½	Street		Waggoner ½	Flynn 1.0	Galbraith 1.0
	Ali		Dzirby ½	Ehrgood			Hanson 1.0	Kohler 1.0
			Kelly ½				Kelleher 1.0	Levay 1.0
			McCall ½				Leonelli 1.0	Libich 1.0
			Duncan ½				Maddoni 1.0	McCall 1.0
			Washington ½				Madjowski 1.0	McKeever ½
							Mattei 1.0	Neckonchuk ½
							Polanco 1.0	Novoa 1.0
			Perf Arts	Goar 1.0			Rambo 1.0	Peischl
			Rowan	Thompson ½			Reiter 1.0	Prickett 1.0
			Stockton	Phillips			Santiago 1.0	Ross 1.0
			Curriculum	Johnson ½			Smith 1.0	
			CAUSE/Garden	Mazzarella			Stovall 1.0	Springer 1.0
							Thomas 1.0	Steiner 1.0
			Special Ed	Cassalle ½			Wagner 1.0	Traeger 1.0
								Treusch 1.0
								Vega 1.0
1/2=	\$2800							Whomsley 1.0
1=	\$4000							
Nothing	12 Months							